

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON - TELEPHONICALLY
NOVEMBER 7, 2005

The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/WSCC) held a special session telephonically on November 7, 2005 in Lacey, Washington. Commission Chair Peters called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS & ACTION ITEMS

1. *2006 Capacity Building Grant Application and Award Process*

Commissioner Barker moved to accept the process as recommended for the 2006 Capacity Building Grant Application and Award Process. Commissioner Bahrych seconded. Motion passed.

ATTENDEES

Commission Members

Jim Peters, Chair
Robert Barker, Member
Bill Boyum, Member, DNR
Lynn Bahrych, Member
Lee Faulconer, Member, AG
Melodie Selby, Member, ECY

Commission Staff

Mark Clark, Executive Director
Mary Anderson, Executive Assistant
Stu Trefry, Regional Manager
Cheryl Witt, Grants Program Manager
Tom Salzer, Regional Manager

Guests

Elsa Coffman, Lincoln County CD
Gus Hughbanks, NRCS
John Larson, WACD Executive Director
Monty Mahan, Pierce CD

Carletta Mahoney, Clark CD
George Mahoney, Clark CD
Geoff Reed, King CD
John Schuh, Skagit CD

BASIC FUNDING CAPACITY BUILDING PROCESS

Cheryl Witt, Grants Program Manager, presented an overview of the Commission staff recommended Basic Funding Capacity Building Process.

Sustaining District Ops – Chapter 31, Laws of 2005 (SHB 1462) allows the Commission to adopt rules concerning eligibility and distribution of grants to conservation districts. One-time funding will provide supplementary basic funding to the state's lowest-income conservation districts. \$100,000 is available for each fiscal year.

The draft process was developed by the District Operations Committee and presented as an informational item at the WSCC September 2005 Meeting. It was also presented to the WACD Officers and Directors, conservation districts and Commission staff for review and comments. The comments were then incorporated and included in this final recommendation to Commission staff.

DRAFT

Outline of Proposed Process

- Awards will be made through an application and ranking process.
- Funding must be used by conservation districts to build/support critical infrastructure.
- Funding is available only to conservation districts that demonstrate financial need and the ability to use the funding for capacity building.
- Eligible capacity building outcomes include: annual and/or long range planning; locally led planning participation; supervisor/associate supervisor training; supervisor/associate supervisor attendance at the Washington Association of District Employees and/or Washington Association of Conservation Districts annual meetings; district employee capacity building training; development of a strategic plan for funding; implementing an assessment or other long term funding; conducting stakeholder and partnership meetings; communications development and enhancement; startup funds for a new program; and identification and application for new sources of grant funding.
- Applications will be numerically ranked based on point ranges assigned to 1) ultimate project outcomes, 2) capacity building need, 3) district financial need and 4) outcomes compared to district needs.
- Rankings will be done by Commission Regional Managers and Grants Staff.
- Grant Staff will work with conservation districts receiving funding to develop grant contracts.
- Funding will be distributed on a reimbursement basis.

Commission staff's recommendation is to approve the Basic Funding Capacity Building process as presented.

A discussion followed on determining conservation districts financial needs. Ms. Witt noted that the districts will be asked to submit their May 2005 Annual Financial Report along with the application. Other information gathered by Grants Staff and Regional Managers will be used in the determination also. The outcome will be based on a district by district basis. There will be a review of the process prior to the next fiscal year's distribution.

Commissioner Barker moved to accept the process as recommended for the 2006 Capacity Building Grant Application and Award Process. Commissioner Bahrych seconded. Motion passed.

Mark Clark, Executive Director, noted that he would like to engage the Commission Members and the District Operations Committee as an observer in the review process. He requested that a person from the District Operations Committee that has not put a grant forward be an observer in the process and a volunteer from the Commissioners. It is important to listen to the information that staff has and how challenging the process will be. He also requested that John Larson, WACD Executive Director be included as well.

LIVESTOCK COST SHARE MAXIMUMS

Mark Clark, Executive Director held a discussion with the conservation districts, WACD Executive Director, John Larson, and Jack Field of the Washington Cattlemen's Association since the last Commission meeting on the livestock cost share hold down amounts.

Mr. Field expressed concern for the hold down amounts and suggested that a process for extraordinary circumstances be considered. Mr. Field will be added to the agenda for the December Commission Meeting.

DRAFT

ASSESSMENT ISSUES

Currently there are three districts where there are issues between the district and the county regarding their assessments; Benton, Mason, and King. Interpretation issues relating to the RCW 89.08.400 process have come up.

King Conservation District raised concerns with the King County Council and Executive regarding the distribution of assessment dollars and asked that the Commission to seek an opinion from the Attorney General's Office. Mr. Clark discussed the issue with Commission Chair Peters and Vice Chair Brown and agreed that an opinion would be requested from the Attorney General's Office.

Mr. Clark was told by the Attorney General's Office that there would be a ninety-day turn-around for a formal opinion and around half that for an informal opinion. As a courtesy, Mr. Clark informed the office of King County Executive, Ron Sims that the Commission will be seeking an Attorney General's opinion on assessment issues. Geoff Reed, King Conservation District stated that the District and the county are currently in the negotiation phase and will try to work toward a mutually acceptable solution.

NEXT COMMISSION MEETING

Regular Commission Meeting:

December 1, 2005

Yakima Convention Center

10 N. 8th Street

Yakima, Washington

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Peters adjourned the meeting at 9:05 a.m.